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NEA Ponders Possibility Of Drastic Budget Cuts

COUNCIL, From D1

Carter had proposed in his fiscal 1982 budget.

At least one NEA program — which handles funds for state programs — has begun a chart which shows the impact of cuts at several hypothetical percentages — 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 percent.

"It's not very pretty," said one NEA official.

The Office of Federal-State Partnership administers the basic state operating grants — funds given to state arts agencies (and in the District, to the D.C. Commission on the Arts) for grants to artists and arts groups. Congress has mandated that the NEA give at least 20 percent of its total budget to the states.

"Generally a large cut in the budget will work to the disadvantage of small or rural states where the portion the NEA gives is a large chunk of the state arts agency's budget," said Henry Putsch, director of the partnership office.

"If — God forbid — there's a 50 percent cut in the NEA's budget," said another endowment official, "our contribution to the D.C. Commission on the Arts would go from \$303,000 this fiscal 1981 to \$200,000 fiscal 1982."

NEA Chairman Livingston Biddle disputed the section of David Stockman's "black book" which argued that extensive federal financing for the arts had "resulted in a reduction in the historic role of private individual and corporate philanthropic support . . ."

"I think that, from the very outset, Congress envisioned the very role of the endowment as catalyst," said Biddle. "Corporate support for the arts has grown from \$22 million in 1966 to more than \$435 million today."

In the 10 years prior to the NEA's founding in 1965, Biddle said, philanthropic support for the arts grew only from \$199 million to \$205 million. In the 10 years after 1965, said Biddle, "that philanthropic support had increased to \$2.7 billion."